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The Sketch

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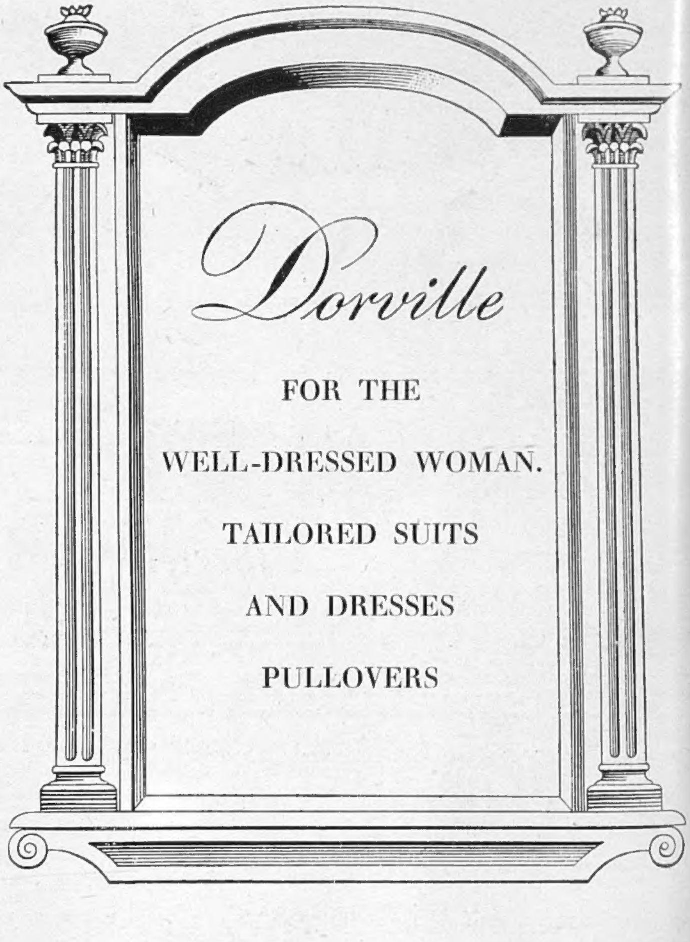

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The Sketch

No. 2658—Vol. CCV. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1946 ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.
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THE FATAL HOUR DRAWS NEAR.

ORSON WELLES *has some blood-curdling sequences in his new picture* "THE STRANGER," *shortly to be presented at the Gaumont, Haymarket, and the Marble Arch Pavilion. Here is the climax of the tale of blood, fear and crime. Professor Rankin, alias Kindler the war criminal (Orson Welles) has planned a horrible murder in the clock-tower of a Connecticut church, but is himself trapped there, and waits the striking of the fatal hour with the statue of a devil as his only companion. Loretta Young and Edward G. Robinson also appear in this thrilling picture.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Shame !

" I want to be a refugee from Britain,
The lovely land where I 'm no longer free,
If they can carry on without Winston Churchill,
They 'll blooming-well have to manage without me ! "

This jewel of English poesy was recently immortalised in the House of Commons. Though declaimed (it seems) with indignant passion, it was received, to the shame of our legislators, with " loud laughter." But to the declaimer there was nothing funny about it, and the laughter was the crackling of thorns under a pot. He had heard the impious lines in one of his lighter moments (which must be rare), when listening to a B.B.C. Variety Programme. Were these sentiments, he asked in a voice trembling with emotion, " worthy of a great Corporation " ? Well, if he doesn't think so, let it be a lesson to him in future not to listen to a B.B.C. Variety Programme. Many others have learned that lesson long ago.

Some Achieve Greatness.

Are these lines " worthy of a great Corporation " ? Closely examined, they cannot be said to be a crystal jet from England's Helicon. They are not distinguished in style, wit or even scansion. A stern moralist might consider their sentiment unpatriotic ; it is even a question whether they do not lay the writer open to prosecution, under Regulation 9999aa (bbb), for causing disaffection and inciting to General Exodus from the Realm. But then there are quite a number of other radio items which may fairly be considered as not " worthy of a great Corporation." There is even a considerable, and, I fancy, a growing body of opinion that the Corporation is not as great as it might be if it had a little healthy competition—certainly that its greatness has not, of late, doubled in proportion to the licence fee. Let me quote another legislator (a supporter of the Government) on the relation of the B.B.C. to literature, art and morals.

" Two pints of water, please."

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

Shakespeare Also Ran.

" Shakespeare, the author of ' Venus and Adonis,' a man suspected of carrying on with Ann Hathaway " (pardon me, Sir, but he *did* marry the girl, didn't he ?) " and not above poaching, would have been given five minutes in ' Saturday Night at Eight.' Nelson, who had an unhappy experience—or was it a happy one ?—would not have been considered until he had been given a peerage. Milton, of course, would not have been considered at all ; he was a Radical and a politician, and it would have been quite impossible to bring him on except for five minutes under the strong guard of the Brains Trust." Come to think of it, there is hardly a celebrated figure in our literature who would have been able to compete with the eminent talents of (say) Mr. J. B. Priestley, Dr. Joad and Commander Campbell. Do those minor geniuses of the past sigh in their graves that there was no radio in their day ? I think not—they have too much regard for their reputations !

Dignity and Impudence.

No, I fear we cannot judge by the most exacting literary standards what is and what is not " worthy of a great Corporation." Why, then, is the trivial jingle which I have quoted selected for solemn denunciation in Parliament ? Because, of course, it is considered to be politically " unsound." It makes aspersions, it casts reflections, it suggests that England of to-day is not the Promised Land. I ask, most seriously, what are we coming to when a Member of Parliament can solemnly make a complaint of this kind ? If I were to express, and if *The Sketch* were to print, my candid opinion of that Member's sense of humour, the Editor, the publisher, the compositor, the printer and I might (a recent precedent suggests) all find ourselves at the Bar of the House for " breach of privilege." We might offend the dignity of a House in which dignity is vindicated by this kind of courteous, witty interchange, which I extract from a current report : " Opposition cheers and Ministerial countercheers and cries of ' Rats ! ' "

" Hush ! darling. You 'll wake your father ! "

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

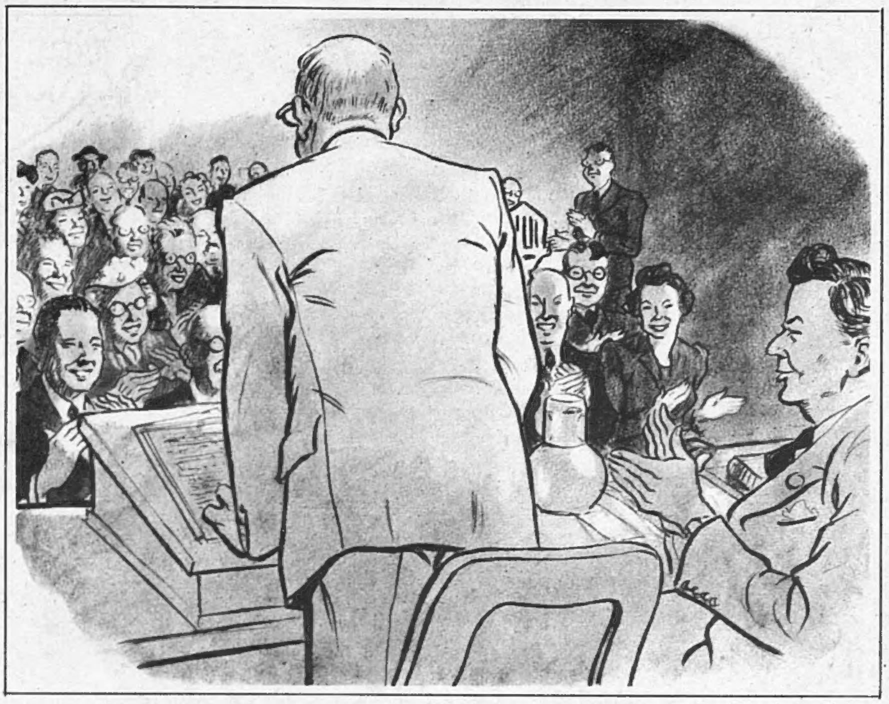
News and Views.

This morbid sensitiveness to criticism is something quite new in our public life, and is an extremely unhealthy thing in a democracy. It now threatens, in unmistakable terms, to become a censorship of the Press. A

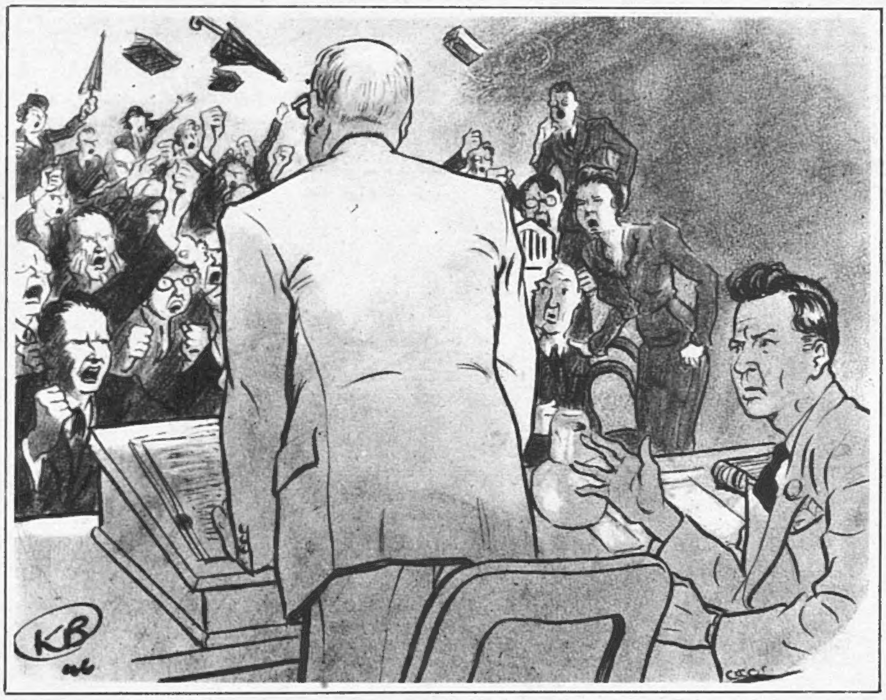
section of the Press—but, of course, *only* a section—is accused of distorting and suppressing news for its own sinister purposes. I am not going to enter upon that controversy, but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and I give just one little example of sauce. On Sunday, July 21st, bread rationing came into force. Now, whatever one's politics, no honest person would deny that this was, at the moment, the major domestic issue before the country and therefore, in the eyes of any journalist, front-page news of the first order. With one exception, all the Sunday papers carried their "stories," and I did not notice one which was in the least degree exaggerated, hysterical or "distorted." The exception was a strong supporter of the Government, which had no reference to the matter at all except an insignificant paragraph of a few inches. I suppose that could not possibly be considered "distortion" of news, for reasons which require little imagination ?

Licence to Live.

One of the most distinguished writers in this country, not himself an active politician or partisan, has recently described England as a prison-house. He has not yet been held up to reprobation in the House of Commons, but I suppose that according to the ideas and notions of the critics of the Press he is a malicious, unfair, unscrupulous critic, and the newspaper which published his very significant article is guilty of "distortion and suppression"—at all events, the Attorney-General has classed it with the "gutter Press." Are we approaching the point where it will be necessary to obtain a licence to write or print any article about anything at all ? It would not be surprising ; a licence seems to be necessary for most other articles. I see that a popular remedy for respiratory disorders advertises itself as a "licence to breathe." Perhaps we are approaching that point too. It has recently been reported that there are only 807 tramps in the country, as against 7227 in 1939. Shall I tell you why ? Because nobody can get a licence to tramp.



"I say—Indonesia for the Indonesians . . . (cheers) ; Albania for the Albanians . . . (cheers) ; India for the Indians . . . (cheers) ; Scotland for the Scots . . . (cheers) . . .



. . . and—England for the English." (*"Shame !" "Hitler !" "Fascist !"*)

DRAWN BY BEAUCHAMP.

Portents.

However, there is one thing for which you *can* get a licence, namely, your daily bread—if you know how. I grow more and more thankful that I do not have to know how, and, God giving me strength, I shall never attempt to know ; in a cowardly, masculine manner, I leave this brain-racker to the stronger sex. Left to myself, I could not form a guess whether I was a Blue Adolescent (L [1], M [2], J [6], BUX [4]), a Buff Normal Adult (there won't be many left if this sort of thing goes on), or a Green Expectant Mother (M [2], L [1], M [2], G [6]). No, I do not understand it, but it seems to me a portent of the times that some anonymous jack-in-office, possessed of an exceptional degree of morbid ingenuity, can sit at a desk and devise this kind of mumbo-jumbo and inflict it with impunity on his fellow-citizens. What does *he* care if he drives millions of housewives, shopkeepers and bakers nearly distracted with his mathematical acrobatics ? He has done a neat, smart, efficient job, and he will probably be promoted for it. I say it is a melancholy portent of the times, and I shall regard it as an even greater and more melancholy portent if the public of this country sits down under it.

The Demon Ice-Cream.

The world changes. You ask for bread and you are given, not a stone, but a piece of paper ; and you ask for beer and you are given—ice-cream ! This ought to bring great satisfaction to the ranks of the Prohibitionists and other Dry Rotters, though it is open to question whether vicious indulgence in ice-cream (which is notoriously habit-forming) will not undermine the national constitution and character more gravely than our modern small beer. It is sad to think of wafers and cornets, so dear to our childhood, as the breakers-up of homes ; sad to think of people shaking their heads over a once-respected citizen, and murmuring, "Yes, he took to hokey-pokey and began beating his wife." But, as I remarked and as I repeat, the world changes ; and things are not what they were.

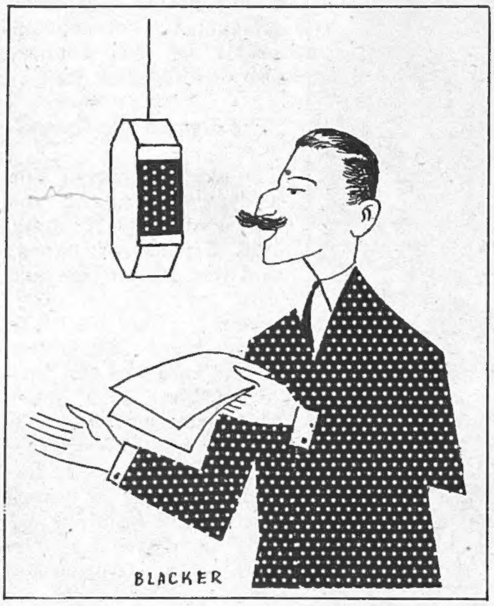
Enough To Go On With.

Except coal. That seems to be very much what it has always been. I am in a position to inform you—and I know it will be a great satisfaction to you—that we can see our way to about twenty thousand million tons of coal, and that this ought to carry us on nicely till about 2042 A.D. It is therefore officially stated that "there is no cause for anxiety about coal for the next hundred years." The authorities are concerned about what is going to happen seventy-five years after that ; but I dare say you will feel, as I do, that we really cannot add that to our daily worries, especially as it seems a little uncertain whether anybody will have any use for coal in the Atomic Age 175 years hence—or, indeed, whether there will be anybody left to have any use for it. Meanwhile, though it is comforting to know that there is all that coal waiting for us in the earth, the problem remains—who is going to get it out for us, when, and how ?

[*Continued overleaf.*

The one-hundred-and-forty-seventh of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

Every Modern Convenience. Science will doubtless find a way—it is finding so many ways to so many things. I read of a new wonder-machine which can " do the work of 40 mathematicians working for 15 years in under ten minutes " (it could do *my* life-work in mathematics in under ten seconds) ; and of another which can transmit to great distances 750,000 words a minute—I 'm certainly going to have one of those to " transmit " *Motley Notes* ! Or would you like, on your next birthday, an " owner-driven helicopter with wings which fold back so that the machine may be used as a motor-car " ? No doubt there will also be an amphibious model for the seaside. Shops are to be replaced, one of these days, by slot-machines—which would not be a bad idea if it reduced the queues, but would it ? It seems that the muscular motions even of tooth-brushing are too much to ask of the civilised human being—we are to have an all-electric toothbrush ! Indeed, the whole human constitution may be changed by radio-activity—whereon Mrs. Clare Booth Luce comments that "it would make a lot more Lana Turners." So what, Mrs. Luce ? Lots of girls would be tickled to death to be as radio-active as Lana Turner.



" . . . and now follows our usual annual report on the Nuremberg Trial."

DRAWN BY BLACKER.

" Bit of orlright, that is ! ' One roundsman per street ' . . . and me with the Great North Road . . . ! "

DRAWN BY PAT AULD.

" Two Loves I Have." I wonder if there is any particular radio-activity about Eros ? The public seems more interested in the restoration, to his former pride of place, of this little winged god than in the effigies of kings, statesmen or philanthropists. Is there a slightly pagan touch here ? The Greeks (I was brought up to believe) recognised two kinds of Love, called Agape and Eros. The former was entirely respectable ; if somewhat dull ; the latter was regarded in the best circles as slightly disreputable. Would not this be a good opportunity to substitute, in the hub of the Metropolis, a nice, quiet statue of Agape—preferably not by Epstein ? Would it not be more appropriate in Piccadilly Circus—or would it ?

Wonderful World.

Chicago has a saint. I always said that they were not *all* gangsters.—According to a recent precedent, you can now be married by telephone. Soon it will be possible to be divorced by telegraph.—" Man bites dog " is well known to be news ; but that a man should be *stabbed* when interfering in a dog-fight (and this has happened) is even bigger news. It is also news that fishermen, off the English coast, should be attacked by a school of sharks. This comes of dumping half-a-million unmarketable herrings overboard, as was done the other day ; it only encourages the sharks.—A bullock climbed 100 steps of an ancient tower at South Kyme, Lincs, but was " induced to descend the steps backwards." This animal ought to be sure of an engagement in any enterprising circus.

" You 're an interviewer. Right ! Are you man enough to go and ask Bevin his private opinion of Molotov ? " [DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.]

GO ON SAVING PAPER : IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL.

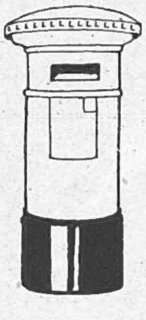
MEPHISTO VALSE.

LUDMILA TCHERINA *danced Marguerite in " Mephisto Valse " one of the ballets in the repertoire of the New Monte Carlo Ballet Company presented during its season at the Cambridge Theatre. This production is a species of triangle ballet drama between Faust; Marguerite and the Devil, and Tcherina brought a keen sense of the dramatic to her performance as Marguerite.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARON.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Faith has been getting into a terrible stew lately because, she says, she is getting too fat. She says it is too much starch in our diet.

"What 's wrong with getting fat?" said Lady B. "Look at me."

"Darling Lady B.," said Faith, "if I thought I was going to get your sort of fat I wouldn't mind, but I shan't. I am getting fat in all the Wrong Places."

"When I began getting fat," said Lady B., "I began in the Wrong Places. It distressed me very much, I remember, though, of course, the skirts we wore at that time, with all the gathers at the back, were a great help."

"Not like slacks," said Faith sadly.

"Of course, darling Faith, you don't absolutely *have* to wear slacks," said the Conductor, who likes his wife in a tea-gown.

"I know," said Faith, "and, as a matter of fact, I don't particularly care for them, but I like to know I can wear them if I want to. When I see Henrietta's flat behind I feel quite ill."

"But you wouldn't like to be thin like Henrietta?"

"I should loathe it," said Faith. "I want to be fat *here* and thin *here*."

"Impossible," said Lady B. "If you are fat *here* you 've got to make up your mind to be fat *there* as well, and if you 're thin *there* you 'll be thin *here*, like Henrietta."

"'You 've got to make up your mind to be fat *there*.'"

"Which is all right in the Summer but a little on the austerity side in the Winter," said Charles.

"They say bustles are coming in again, Faith," I said, trying to comfort her, but she gave me a withering look and asked me if I could see her walking down the Street with a shopping basket and a bustle.

A week later she asked us round for drinks and announced that she was going for a fortnight's Cure to Marlew, which is a Stately Home taken over as a sort of clinic, where people go to be made thin and feel better after drinking too many cocktails.

"And it 's no good you looking at me like that, Charles darling," said Faith, "because it 's all arranged and I 'm going to-morrow."

"I 'm not looking at you like anything, my Angel," said Charles. "If you like to go and spend all that money you can, but if you stayed at home and stopped drinking and smoking——"

"Don't be silly, Sweetest," said Faith.

"I thought you 'd say that," said Charles.

"You go on as though I were a hardened toper," said Faith, her lovely eyes filling with tears.

"Darling Faith!" cried Charles, clasping her in his arms, "I didn't mean anything of the kind. You are a most moderate drinker, but to some people one drop of alcohol means a pound of fat."

"Not me," I said smugly.

"The treatment is supposed to make Thin people Fat as well as Fat people Thin," said Faith, fixing me with that determined look, which we all dread.

"No, no, Faith!" I cried wildly, for I could see the net closing round me. But in the end, of course, I went to Marlew with Faith, because we always do what she wants us to do.

As we drove up to the door some of the inmates who were lying about in hammocks and deck chairs on the lawn turned their heads slowly and gazed at us dully through lack-lustre eyes. "Not a very lively lot," said Faith, who had hoped for exciting social contacts. Doctor Farqueson-Jones, who interviewed us singly, looked like a potentate of the church, and beyond the embarrassment of appearing before a Bishop in one's cami-knickers, the interview passed off successfully.

"You are very thin, Mrs. Browne." "I know."

"Too much smoking, Mrs. Browne," said the Bishop, wagging a playful forefinger. "But I don't smoke."

This remark was ignored, wisely, I think, and the attendant Nurse took me away, put me to bed, and gave me a glass of orange-juice. The bed was so soft it was like lying on a bubble, and there was an excellent light for reading. I began to feel glad I had come to Marlew with Faith, who had been so anxious for company that she was paying all expenses.

In the morning we had some more orange-juice and Faith began smoothing her hips and saying she was sure she had lost weight already. At lunch we had prunes and some more orange-juice, and Faith tried to get herself weighed, but was told it was too soon. It was not until the third day that we began to feel really frightful. When we had been there a week, Faith, who was sitting in the Lounge, said suddenly in a loud voice, "I would like a nice chop with green peas and new potatoes." All the other inmates sat up and glared at her, and a retired Admiral snarled something out of the corner of his mouth and walked out of the room. After that Faith was put into a sort of solitary confinement and kept in bed.

I sat about in the garden, because my legs felt too weak to walk. When I looked up and saw Charles grinning at me I burst into tears.

"Charles," I said, "I 'm starving."

"Of course you are," said Charles. "Come on, I 've got something for you in the car."

"But Faith——"

"Serve her right," said Charles unkindly. "It was a silly idea, considering nobody's getting enough to eat, anyway."

In the car was a Thermos container with one of Evensong's best stews in it. I don't think I've ever enjoyed anything so much. I asked Charles when he was coming again, and he said he couldn't keep driving across the county.

"Then I 'm coming back with you," I said, and dashed upstairs to my room and began throwing clothes into my suit-case. Faith heard me banging about and came into my room just as I was leaving. She was so delighted at the thought of getting home that she quite forgot to be angry and I helped her pack, and she came away just as she was, in her dressing-gown.

The Sister caught us sneaking down the stairs. She didn't seem very surprised. I suppose she was used to people running away. "Of course, if you *want* to go away full of poison——" she said, raising her eyebrows.

"There 's only one thing the matter with my colon," said Faith. "It 's empty."

"I burst into tears."

When we got home we weighed ourselves in Charles' Consulting Room. I had lost six pounds and Faith had gained three ounces. She 's trying exercises now.

Always your affectionate
Childhood's Friend,
HENRIETTA.

"'If you *want* to go away full of poison.'"

"THEY SAY THE LION AND THE LIZARD KEEP THE COURTS WHERE JAMSHYD GLORIED AND DRANK DEEP."

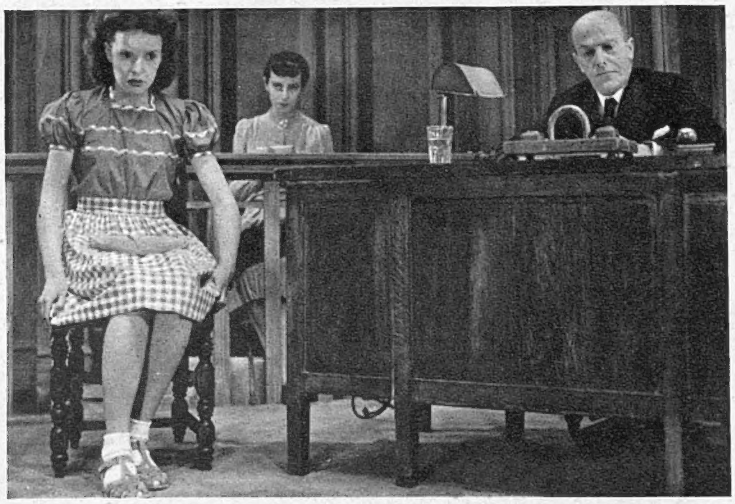
For Omar Khayyam's "courts" read London's offices; the houses of ordinary people. For "gloried and drank deep" read worked and lived, loved and married. And for "lion and lizard" the profusely blooming wild flowers: Oxford ragwort; purple buddleia; rosebay willow-herb; apple-trees; ferns, which have planted themselves on London's bombed sites, grouping themselves so perfectly they might have been planted by a first-class rock-gardener.

STAGE CAMEOS.

By JOHN RUSSELL.

IN his new operetta, "BIG BEN," Sir Alan Herbert gives us the image of English political life as seen through his own kindly and ennobling spectacles. The Adelphi Theatre resounds, it must be admitted, to the threats of a Socialist straight out of *Punch*—and a 1910 *Punch* at that; even Sir Waldron Smithers could find nothing fearful in Mr. Trefor Jones, who has the best voice in the company, but is not given his fair share either of the good tunes or of Sir Alan's better jokes. As for the Conservatives, they are such a set of angels and seraphs as was never before glimpsed outside the Elysian Fields. Not for nothing is their new-created grocer-peer given the title of Lord Lavender.

A foreigner might infer from all this that Sir Alan is using his privileged status as an Independent Member of Parliament in order to have the fun of



"Pick-up Girl" (Prince of Wales's). Elizabeth Collins (PATRICIA PLUNKETT), *fifteen-year-old sex-delinquent, confesses details of her life to Judge Bentley* (ERNEST JAY), *who listens patiently, tolerantly, kindly.*

taking sides without any of the bother of party loyalties. This would be an injustice. Sir Alan, to whom we owe a model piece of humane legislation, is a kindly man in an unkindly world; politics, in his view, should be the instrument of human happiness. When his heroine sings (and what a good tune Mr. Vivian Ellis has written) "I want to see people happy, I want to see the people sing," she is speaking for him; and it is understandable that Mr. C. B. Cochran, whose 125th production this is, should find this sympathetic; for he, too, during a long life in the theatre, has wanted to see the people happy.

"Big Ben" is produced with all Mr. Cochran's old smoothness and delicacy; even a by-election becomes, in his hands, a thing of leisure, grace and charm. (One can't help remembering, though, that Sir Alan does his electioneering by post.) Those who have sat through other musical plays may notice a welcome and unfamiliar flavour in Sir Alan's script; it is not that the jokes or the versification are always good, for indeed the wit has little edge, but that it is the work of a man to whom kindness and good feeling are important.

The company on this occasion contained none of those startling discoveries on which Mr. Cochran could once pride himself, and Miss Zinkeisen's costumes will not make Balenciaga swoon with envy; but Miss Carole Lynne behaved like an agreeable young person and not, after the manner of other heroines, like a juvenile delinquent released on bail. Miss Gabrielle Brune will always make her mark, and as the queen of busybodies, Miss Joan Young cheerfully drew down upon herself our displeasure, the better to please us when she later reformed. Among the gentlemen (such a production exacts this courtly phrase) Mr. Eric Palmer has that touch of inexperience which, whether real or simulated, prevents a musical comedy hero from being odious; and as for the King's Watermen, all rowed fast, but none, I am glad to report, so fast as stroke—Mr. David Davies.

If "Big Ben" is a festival of good feeling, occasionally flawed by the demands of timid "good taste," "VICIOUS CIRCLE," at the Arts Theatre, is a fiesta of bad feeling, into which taste, good or bad, enters not at all. Newspaper readers have been misled into thinking that this is a pretentious play, with some ill-defined philosophical motive behind it. Nothing could be less true. M. Jean-Paul Sartre has written a perfectly clear and overwhelmingly exciting little piece, which is acted by Miss Beatrix Lehmann, Miss Betty Ann Davies and Mr. Alec Guinness in a way to make us proud of the English theatre. The plot is simple: three people, condemned to pass eternity in Hell, find on their arrival there that they are quite free from the conventional punishments of the rack and the wheel. They soon find, however, that one another's company is a torment far more effective than, let us say, the Iron Virgin of Nuremberg. Each is the other's ball and chain. It is a play with no exits, no pauses, no change of clothes, lighting or scene. Mr. Peter Brook has wonderfully regulated its excitement, and the result is an hour and a half of unforgettable theatre.

English actors are often remarkable for the urbanity and ease of their playing; they excel (as indeed they need to) at making much out of nothing; and when for once a piece calls instead for a precise savagery of style, players like these can tear out one's hair, as well as each other's, by the roots.

Now that Mr. Clunes has brought Miss Beatrix Lehmann back to London, and that we have seen her with, as always, breathless astonishment, will he not put on M. Sartre's other play, "Les Mouches"? Miss Lehmann's performance as Electra in Eugene O'Neill's "Mourning Becomes Electra" will not be forgotten for many years, and we should all like to see her follow an American Electra with a French one. A play such as "Vicious Circle" exposes new qualities in those who perform it; Mr. Guinness, who had recently descended into hell for the B.B.C. in Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus," made the journey like an experienced traveller; Miss Davies, in standing up to two such formidable players, seemed to risk, and to risk successfully, the last ounces

Supported by her husband (HUGH PRYSE), *Mrs. Collins* (JOAN MILLER) *explains to the judge that, her husband being out of work, herself working day and night to make both ends meet, they have not been able to exercise a proper supervision over Elizabeth.*

of her strength and skill. A word, too, for Mr. Donald Pleasaunce, who admirably set the tone of the play.

The authors of "G.I. BRIDES AT SEA," at the Granville Theatre, have certainly not flattered the average mental stature of English womanhood; only, indeed, by their changes of dress and tendency to sea-sickness could these brides be distinguished from convicted female felons. Only one of them could be called a credit to England: and in seeking to lure her back to Europe with reminiscences of *vin rosé* and Breton fishing villages, the authors perhaps underestimated their audience's resistance to fancy talk. However, Miss Mary Horn was worth watching, and Mr. John Allen deserved better lines.

The worried parents say good-bye to Elizabeth before she goes to hospital; to leave it for a Juvenile Delinquents' Home. Elsa Shelley's play, though based in America, is of global interest and topicality; an important social document.

PLAYS YOU MUST SEE: "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (Globe). "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN" (Savoy). "UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phœnix). "SWEETEST AND LOWEST" (Ambassadors). "BIG BEN" (Adelphi).

PLAYS WELL WORTH SEEING: "HIGH TIME" (Palladium). "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket). "PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome). "THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC" (Coliseum). "THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's). "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's). "FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's). "WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall). "THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion). "SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace). "FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand). "BETTER LATE" (Garrick). "HERE COME THE BOYS" (Saville). "NO ROOM AT THE INN" (Winter Garden). "FRIEDA" (Westminster). "GANG SHOW" (Stoll). "THE KINGMAKER" alternating with "MARRIAGE A LA MODE" (St. James's). "THE WINSLOW BOY" (Lyric). "GRAND NATIONAL NIGHT" (Apollo). "CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" (New). "PICK-UP GIRL" (Prince of Wales's).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

WEEK by week I get letters from ardent strangers who want to know how to "get into films"—letters pleading, letters pompous, letters confident, letters wistful, letters with and without, but mostly without, stamped addressed envelopes. Few of these aspirants want to "get into films" as actors. No, they want to direct films or write scripts, and most of them give as their qualifications the fact that they have some real-life story to tell, some honest message to deliver.

Well, children, I hate to discourage you, but the last thing the average distributor or executor wants is pictures about real people and real life. He says they are dull. He says they are highbrow. He says, "Wot! No legs?" Let me tell you a sad little story in illustration.

Once upon a time there was a young woman called Jill Craigie, who thought very much as you do. She had an idea. She wanted to make films about ordinary people and the way they live, and she wanted to make them amusing and entertaining as well as honest. She thought, in the simplicity of her heart, that such films would be rather nice to use as second features in a double bill, instead of some of those Hollywood B pictures about swing bands, and marines, and mad doctors, and murderers, and ape-men.

So she went to see J. Arthur Rank, and he was enthusiastic about her idea. He thought it would be nice to get rid of some of the ape-men, too. So he gave Miss Craigie the word to go, and she wrote a story about the replanning of blitzed Plymouth, and called it "THE WAY WE LIVE." She directed it herself, and chose her cast from the ordinary people of Plymouth, and took down a camera-man who photographed it lyrically and excitingly, and she got a

"Anna and the King of Siam" (New Gallery and Tivoli, August 11). In 1862 Anna Owens (IRENE DUNNE) *arrived at Bangkok with her son Louis* (RICHARD LYON, *r.) to teach the children of King Mongkut* (REX HARRISON). *His instincts were rooted in the past, but his mind raced ahead, and he wanted a modern to help him guide Siam.*

To show the English emissary, Sir Edward Ramsay (played by Dennis Hoey) how modern Siam had become, the King instructed Anna (by door) to dress his wives in Western dress; to teach them European manners. She managed admirably; received a royal present.

clever composer to write the music, and one of our best orchestras to play it. When J. Arthur Rank saw the finished picture he was delighted, but other members of his organisation weren't. They said it was "dull" and, which was worse, it made the audience think.

To cut a long story short, Miss Craigie has been taught what it is to make a film about the way we live. At the time of writing, no London show and no general release have been arranged for this picture. Unless the distributors take heart and abandon their timid attitude, most of us will never see one of the most witty, persuasive and heart-warming documentaries ever made in this country, and a young woman who promises to be a first-class writer and director may have to look elsewhere for her bread-and-marg.

Now if Miss Craigie had been really smart, she would not have bothered about the way people live at all, but would have made a film about the way distributors and exhibitors like to *think* they live, such as "CLUNY BROWN," which is holding court at the Odeon, or "TO EACH HIS OWN," which is cosily ensconced at the Plaza. Both these films give us Hollywood's idea of British life and customs, and either the producers have been sadly misinformed, or they have blandly disregarded their sources, and gone on representing England as it is no doubt preferred in Kansas City.

"Cluny Brown" is about a Cockney plumber's niece, who can cure the most obstinate case of sink trouble by giving the thing six smart blows with a hammer. You would have thought this art would be appreciated, but no. Instead of earning several thousand pounds a year and the passionate gratitude of countless choked-up householders, Cluny is snubbed by everybody, and has to go as second parlourmaid to a stuffy titled family. There she leads a slave existence until she is rescued by a refugee Czech professor and taken to America. The film has been produced and directed by Ernst Lubitsch, who obviously knows or cares as little about British titled families as he does about the status of the British plumber. His upper classes are moronic snobs. His lower classes are servile bullies. As for his parlour-maid, although prettily played by Jennifer Jones, she is clearly the sort of girl who needs a few smart blows with a coke-hammer to set up her own mental plumbing; since, faced with a choice between Charles Boyer and a smug local chemist with a dotty mother, she prefers the chemist until the last five minutes of the film.

"To Each His Own," with Olivia De Havilland, is not quite such an outrage to the intelligence until the final reel; but when it does get out of hand, it does the thing thoroughly. Most of the film is taken up with a tear-drenched story of an unmarried mother of the last war, who lets another woman adopt her son, and yearns after him anonymously for twenty years, keeping his Press-cuttings in a scrapbook. The present war finds Miss De Havilland and scrapbook in London, and long-lost son arriving on a troop train from, of all odd places, Huddersfield. With the help of a sympathetic peer (Roland Culver), who has influence with *restaurateurs*, the Admiralty, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Miss De Havilland arranges for her son to marry a Wren, at midnight, with candles and a wedding cake, in the private chapel of a London restaurant. The scales fall from son's eyes. He recognises the maternal touch. Returning to the restaurant dance-floor, amid the encouraging cheers of the browsers and sluicers, he takes her hand tenderly and whispers, "Our dance, I think, *Mother*." Coo!

The British film "MEN OF TWO WORLDS" (Gaumont and Marble Arch) is a much more solid proposition than either of these Hollywood works, but I found it almost as difficult to swallow. We are asked to believe that an educated African (Robert Adams), at the height of his fame as a composer and concert pianist in London, with all the Myra Hess *alumni* clamouring for his autograph, should be chosen by the British Government as the ideal man to be flown (priority) to Tanganyika, to help a superstitious native tribe to combat an attack of sleeping sickness. Now I simply cannot credit this situation for one moment, nor can I believe in the ineffectual attempts of the British District Commissioner (Eric Portman) and a woman doctor (Phyllis Calvert) to curb the playful pranks of the local witch-doctor. But the producers have plainly taken a lot of trouble, and have keenly appreciated the delicacy of their subject, and I am prepared to pass it as a fair *beta*, with ten marks extra for a good try.

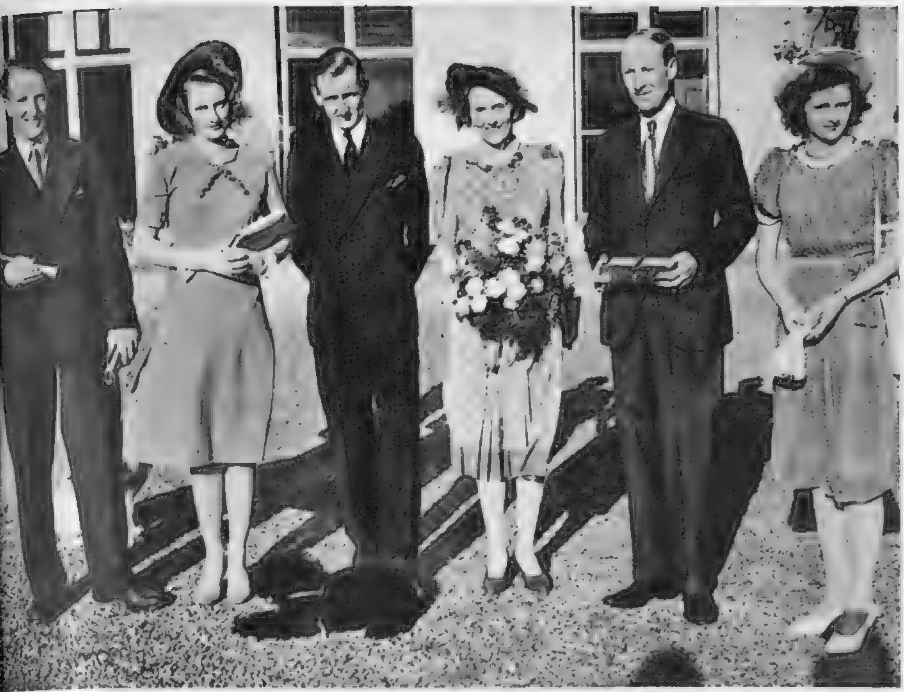
Left at the Royal palace gates with other gifts was Tuptim (LINDA DARNELL), *who soon became Mongkut's favourite wife. But she went wrong; was burned alive. Siam emerged from mediævalism; on the death of the King, Anna had the pleasure of seeing Prince Chulalongkorn his heir; her charge become King; renounce barbarous customs; embrace modern ways.*

H.R.H. PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF KENT *attended the Aldershot Horse Show and presented prizes. She is giving* MISS S. WILSON *the cup for the class for Children's Ponies under 13 hands.*

THE HON. MRS. CLAUDE KNIGHT, *daughter of Lady Monk Bretton, and her daughter Patricia organised pony rides for the young guests at the Conservative Fête and Garden Party at Conyboro Cooksbridge, Sussex.*

Regent's Park has once again this summer been transformed into a wood near Athens, through the witchery of "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM." *This is a gen view of an audience of all ages entranced by a scene in Robert Atkins's production. The Fairies are dancing round the recumbent form of Bottom* (ROBERT ATKI

THE DREAM IN A ROYAL PARK; DUCAL SILVER WEDDING



ORD DALKEITH, THE DUCHESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND, THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, THE DUKE nd DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH and LADY CAROLINE SCOTT *at Boughton Hall. The Duke and Duchess f Buccleuch received silver-wedding gifts, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, wedding presents.*

MISS SONIA MARY PEAKE, *second daughter of Mr. Osbert and Lady Joan Peake, is engaged to Lieut. D. G. M. Hay, R.N.R., only son of the late Lieut.-Colonel Lord Edward Hay.*

ile in the foreground the mortal lovers, Helena (Iris Baker), Hermia (Patricia Hicks), Lysander (Andrew Faulds) and Demetrius (Peter Bell) lie fast asleep. ary Honer plays Puck, Vivienne Bennett, Titania, and John Byron is Oberon. [PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM DAVIS.]

AN ENGAGEMENT; A HORSE SHOW AND A GARDEN FÊTE.

SOCIALITE REGISTER:

MISS ANGELA JACKSON *worked at the Foreign Office; is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. M. Jackson. Mr. Jackson was in the Grenadier Guards; is a well-known mining engineer, and Deputy-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. Mrs. Jackson is the daughter of Sir Henry Stephenson, Bt., D.S.O.*

MISS ELIZABETH JACKSON, *like her sister, on the left, worked at the Foreign Office during the war, and is still at her job.*

MISS SUSAN ARMSTRONG-JONES, *Secretary of the Badsworth Hunt, works very hard at her job; is just eighteen; is step-daughter to the Earl of Rosse; daughter of Lady Rosse by an earlier marriage; and niece of Oliver Messel, painter and theatrical designer. She spends most of her time at Lord Rosse's Yorkshire home.*

The HON. ANN MARY LOWTHER *is the daughter of Viscount and Viscountess Lowther; farms with her mother at Thwaite Hill Farm, Howtown, Penrith, Cumberland. Of her two brothers, Captain the Hon. James Lowther is in Germany; and the Hon. A. Lowther, 12th Hussars, is in Palestine.*

CAMERA PORTRAITS BY YEVONDE.

SOME DEBS. OF 1946.

MISS ROSEMARY COLVILLE, *younger daughter of the Rt. Hon. Sir John Colville, Governor of Bombay, and Lady Colville, of Braidwood House, Braidwood, Lanarkshire. She is eighteen ; has been studying agriculture at Edinburgh University ; will shortly leave with her mother for Bombay.*

LADY HYACINTH NEEDHAM *is the younger daughter of the Earl and Countess of Kilmorey ; served three years in the W.R.N.S. Her mother is a daughter of the fourteenth Earl of Huntingdon.*

MISS ADÈLE JULIE BONVILLE-WERE *is the only daughter of Major Vivian Nicholas Bonville-Were, the Coldstream Guards, and Mrs. Bonville-Were. Miss Bonville-Were left school last autumn ; served with the Soldiers and Sailors' Families Association ; came out at the first of the Royal garden-parties.*

MISS DIANA GARLE, *daughter of Captain J. A. B. and Mrs. Garle, was a Queen Charlotte's Ball débutante this year. Her mother served in the M.T.C. throughout the war ; is Master of the Silverton Foxhounds. Captain Garle was Master of the West Kent Foxhounds up to 1939 ; trained war-dogs during the war.*

CAMERA STUDIES BY YEVONDE.

JILL CRAIGIE *is proof that a career is no bar to domesticity in these days of home-help shortage. She lays the table.*

On the staircase at Frognal Lodge, Hampstead, is McEr... portrait of Ramsay MacDonald. The house was loaned to ... by his son, Malcolm MacDonald, when she lost her home in the b...

WE TAKE O...

MISS JILL CRAIGIE, for Bri... and ac...

MISS JILL CRAIGIE, England's only wom... produced and directed "The Way We Li... Plymouth; a record which applies to any other b... live it; is simple, well-observed, has the right se... "The Way We Live" runs for just over an hour; ... theme the replanning, rebuilding of a bombed city. ... can be proud. Miss Craigie also produced and wrote ...

A close-up in the mirror: Jill Craigie rightly pays as much attention to her personal appearance as she does to production details.

Interested in architecture she reads a book on the ... of antiques, rang...

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

The only female film-director in England takes stock of her looks—considers the day's make-up.

Here are some pieces which Miss Craigie has collected towards the furnishing of her new home in Surrey, a farmhouse: an old painted bureau, and the Renoir above it.

OUR HAT TO—

tain's only woman film-director

ass on.

ector, and wife of film-director Jeffery Dell, has ord of the experiences of a bombed-out family in mily in England. It shows English life as we really t this country, without blah and sentimental shams. documentary of life during and after the war; its treme'y well by amateurs it is a film of which we Chaos—an excellent record of art in England at war.

merican architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Is a collector niture to bracelets.

Miss Craigie and her husband were bombed out themselves; so she directed "The Way We Live" from personal experience.

Forston House, Dorchester, where Lord and Lady Huntingdon have moved in just recently, is a perfectly proportioned small manor house in a soft pink shade of brick.

An early nineteenth-century Huntingdon portrait and LADY HUNTINGDON *in a corner of the drawing-room.*

HER readers know her as MARGARET LANE, but in private life this author is Lady Huntingdon, wife of the fifteenth Earl of Huntingdon, who succeeded to the title in 1939. Miss Lane has written four novels: one, titled "Faith, Hope, No Charity," won the Prix Femina Vie Heureuse. Another—"Where Helen Lies"—is shortly to be filmed. She has two biographies to her credit; the life of Edgar Wallace, and "The Tale of Beatrix Potter," famous animal story-writer for children, which has just been published. Lord and Lady Huntingdon have two little daughters—Lady Selina and Lady Caroline Hastings. They live in Forston House, near Dorchester. Lord Huntingdon, besides being an Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, is a painter, chiefly of murals and frescoes.

Up-to-date Romney? LADY SELINA HASTINGS *is sixteen months old; the book on Beatrix Potter is dedicated to her*

Handsome wrought-iron gates mark the entrance to the drive, which is bordered by very fine trees.

BEATRIX POTTER'S BIOGRAPHER—MARGARET LANE.

SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH" BY F. J. GOODMAN.

ROYAL VISIT TO THE REGENCY FESTIVAL.

H.M. THE QUEEN *and* QUEEN MARY *visited Brighton last week, to inspect the Royal Pavilion, where for the Regency Festival much of the original furniture and objets d'art have been assembled, loaned by many owners. The Queen was accompanied by Lord Bessborough, President of the Festival; and Queen Mary, its patron, was accompanied by Mr. William Teeling, M.P., its Chairman, and Mr. Clifford Musgrave, Curator of the Royal Pavilion Estate. The King, from Buckingham Palace, the Queen and Queen Mary have all loaned pieces which were originally in the Royal Exhibition. The Festival closes August 10; is held in aid of Sussex charities. Other pages show guests in costume for the Regency Ball.*

ALSO AT BRIGHTON'S REGENCY BALL.

MISS ANNE CLIFFORD *represented her Regency forbear, Eleanor Mary, second daughter of the eighth Lord Arundell of Wardour, who married the sixth Lord Clifford in 1786. Miss Clifford, eldest daughter of Captain the Hon. Sir Bede and Lady Clifford, was in Mrs. John Dewar's party.*

Novelist MRS. ISOBEL STRACHEY *was Jane Austen's (1775-1817) famous character Elizabeth Bennett of "Pride and Prejudice." Mrs. Strachey took the title of Jane Austen's unfinished book "First Impressions" for a successful novel of her own. She is working very hard on a new book.*

MR. JOHN RICHARDSON *went as the wealthy eccentric William Beckford (1760-1844) of Fonthill author of "Vathek." He holds a contemporary book on Fonthill Abbey, Beckford's fantastic edifice, in his hands. Mr. Richardson is Lady (Wodehouse) Richardson's eldest son.*

MRS. VIVA KING *impersonated a Regency lady. Her husband, Mr. William King, an Assistant Keeper in the British Museum, is heir presumptive to the barony of King held by his cousin Lord Lovelace; her house a rendezvous for the artists and intellectuals of London.*

PHOTOGRAPHS SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH" BY F. J. GOODMAN.

AT THE REGENCY BALL AS LADY BLESSINGTON: MRS. OSWALD BIRLEY.

Highlight of Brighton's Regency Festival was the Regency Costume Ball held in the Royal Pavilion August 1, with guests dressed as characters of Regency days. MRS. OSWALD BIRLEY, *wife of the painter, modelled Lady Blessington (1789-1849), that woman of rare beauty, wit and charm, whose home attracted whatever was distinguished in literature, learning, art, science, fashion. For some years Lady Blessington edited " The Book of Beauty " and " The Keepsake."*

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH" BY F. J. GOODMAN.

"BIG BEN" CHIMES AT THE ADELPHI.

Lord Lavender (ERIC FORT) *sings " There's a Lot to be Said for the Lords."*

The King's Bargemaster (DAVID DAVIES) *and his Watermen singing " London Town."*

Grace Green (CAROLE LYNNE), *the Socialist candidate for Parliament, daughter of the King's Bargemaster.*

Juniper Joy (GABRIELLE BRUNE) *raises a storm at the three-party political meeting by asking the Conservative Candidate, the Hon. George Home* (ERIC PALMER), *an awkward question.*

" BIG BEN," the new light opera by Sir Alan Herbert, M.P., is Charles B. Cochran's 125th production, and drew a brilliant political audience to its first night at the Adelphi. The setting is political, and the action unrolls in the House of Commons, in Parliament Square, in Committee rooms, and other kindred settings, but the satire, though wittily aimed at all three parties in turn is gentle and possessed of no savage cutting edge. The music is by Vivian Ellis, and Wendy Toye has directed the production.

Juniper Joy (GABRIELLE BRUNE) *giving one of her song-hits, " The Poodle and the Pug."*

BACK TO THE STAGE—
IN "CLUTTERBUCK."

NAUNTON WAYNE and BASIL RADFORD *will make a welcome return to the West End stage in Benn W. Levy's comedy "Clutterbuck," which is due at Wyndham's on August 14. Here they are—literally back to the stage—after a series of successful screen and radio engagements. The comedy, which is set on a pleasure-cruise liner and in a South American island in the carefree pre-war period, has had a big success during its pre-London tour. It brings back Benn W. Levy, the M.P. for Slough, to the theatre, is presented by Stephen Mitchell, who has been away for six years, serving as a major in the Gordon Highlanders.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGUS MCBEAN.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

CERTAIN dates have been recognised as turning-points in the world's history: the accession of Charles V. in 1519, for instance, marked the end of the Middle Ages. More often these critical dates are associated with wars and conquests: 1066 and all that. A lesser-known date, but one most important to wine-lovers, was the year 1868, when the phylloxera, as fatal to wine as was Chæronæa to liberty, laid waste the vineyards of France. Wine, so say some of the experts, has never been the same since. And without being over-fanciful, one might say that the human race has never been quite the same since the great convulsion that overtook it in 1914. In that year Merrie England died a second death.

Miss Marie Belloc and Mr. Frederic Lowndes were married in 1896, and at once took up residence in Great College Street, Westminster, in a house that had been the bride's home and belonged to her mother. The four little streets—Great College Street, Barton Street, Cowley Street and Lord North Street—" remain much as they were laid out and built in the time of Queen Anne." Except for a brief and much-regretted apostasy to Ashley Gardens, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes has always lived in that enchanted district. The Second World War drove her away from one house in Barton Street, but before it was over she had returned to another.

The Third Element. In " The Merry Wives of Westminster " she writes of her life between 1896 and 1914. One might call it the third instalment of her autobiography, for she takes up the thread where she left it in " Where Love and Friendship Dwelt." The new book is also a record of love and friendship, for Mrs. Lowndes has, in a most unusual degree, a gift for both. But now a third element appears: the literary career that had such arduous beginnings and such a happy and successful flowering. When she wanted to submit " The Lodger " (of which over a million copies have since been sold) to an American publisher, she could not find, in any of the English reviews, a single favourable quotation to send with it. " The Lodger's " ultimate success, with that of " The Chink in the Armour," convinced Mrs. Lowndes that " thrillers " were her *genre*, and a whole generation has delightedly, and uncomfortably, shuddered with her. But she did not begin as a thriller-writer. Her first regular work was with the *Illustrated London News*, and her first stories, " The Heart of Penelope " and " Barbara Rebell," were " straight " novels. And in this latest and richest phase of her harvest her interest in human beings requires no condiment from their crimes.

MRS. SYLVIA LILEY, *of Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire, won the Open Hackney Class at the Aldershot Horse Show, with her splendid mover Hampton Silhouette. The quality of the entries was high; included horses and riders of international reputation.*

Names and Facts. Her acquaintance was enormous. It soon stretched far beyond the confines of Westminster and its merry wives and embraced half of political and literary London. People wander in and out of her pages spontaneously and informally; snapshots, not set-pieces, make up her portraiture. It is tedious to give a catalogue of names and would be misleading, for Mrs. Lowndes never introduces a name, however resounding, for its own sake: her interest in people is personal, and what she tells us of her many illustrious friends would be almost equally absorbing if it were told of a charwoman or a chimney-sweep. She has a mind that delights in the concrete detail, the fact in the case—that Barrie worshipped physical courage, that Turgueniev probably owed his life to the devoted nursing of Pauline Viardot; that Henry James abruptly left a party where a friend was being slandered; that a large number of Hardy's short stories were founded on fact; that Arnold Bennett, in some ways the most generous of men, had a " fierce determination " " not to be done." Of each of her subjects a very distinct picture emerges, Maurice Hewlett's being perhaps the most striking of all; and each has that spacious, sunny background of pre-1914 security and stability which Mrs. Lowndes, though she has long outlived it, knows so well how to conjure up.

A Topical Novel. Peggy Windsor is the nice, rather simple-minded wife of David, a sergeant in the R.A.S.C. David is in Italy and she has not seen him for four years. (The time is the summer of 1944, and there is a very vivid description of the début of the flying bomb.) Peggy lives in Streatham, first with David's parents and then with hers, and works in a house-agent's office. She has a warm and feeling heart and is indignant with the way her boss takes advantage of the housing shortage to force up prices. Two American soldiers, who come to the office in search of a flat, are indignant too. This is the beginning of the bond between Peggy and Nick Beaman, a tall, attractive American airman, pilot of a Flying Fortress. One evening he breaks down under the nervous strain and Peggy, largely from pity, becomes his mistress. Soon David returns from Italy; Peggy finds she is going to have a baby, and the fat is in the fire.

Mr. Frank Tilsley handles this very topical situation with much tact but without shirking any of the issues. American grievances against England, English grievances against America are squarely faced and found not to amount to much. Comradeship overcomes criticism. Nick, the amorist, is a nice fellow; David, the betrayed husband, is less sympathetic but perhaps not less natural. Peggy is almost too simple: would she have discussed her husband with Nick, and her lover with David, quite so copiously? Perhaps the best piece of portraiture is to be found in Peggy's parents, who are brilliantly done. Mr. Tilsley solves one of his problems (I won't say which) not unplausibly but rather unfairly; otherwise " Peggy Windsor and the American Soldier," with its clever analysis and presentation of ordinary people caught in circumstances too strong for them, is a remarkably good novel.

Thirteen at Table. When thirteen sit down at table it is natural for a certain feeling of discomfort and apprehension to be abroad. But when, in addition, the salt-cellars are in the form of coffins and the name-cards are held by miniature skulls, it is clear that trouble is being taken to make our flesh creep. Indeed, Mr. Farjeon takes too much trouble; he insists too much on the macabre; or is it that the reader's conscience may be supposed to be clearer than those of the diners? All the same, an intriguing party sits down at " The Oval Table "; and as the book goes on it gathers momentum instead of losing it, as detective-stories tend to do. The number and variety of red herrings would attract a fishing fleet; and if some of them are hard to swallow, surely that is to be expected with such a lavishly-boned fish.

Ingredients of a Fantasy. " The Devil in Woodford Wells " is a fantasy that will delight some people even more than it will infuriate others. The people it will delight are those who enjoy a mystery, who can be absorbed in the cricket lore, scores and averages, of nearly 150 years ago, who have more than a passing acquaintance with the work of Sir Max Beerbohm, and who have a taste for literary and historic allusion not unaccompanied by a graceful and scholarly facetiousness. The admirers of Miss Rachel Ferguson's books will be sure to like Mr. Harold Hobson's, for his special brand of fantasy has much in common with hers.

On the threshold of the British Museum Reading Room, in wartime, the narrator, Mallard, meets a mysterious gentleman who is denied admittance because he cannot, or will not, say whether his work is helping the war effort. It appears that he has never heard of Hitler. Soon he reveals his name as Soames; and the narrator is perhaps a little slow in connecting him with the hero of one of Max Beerbohm's best-known stories. Mallard's business in the Reading Room is with cricket, and the details of a match between the village of Woodford Wells and the county of Essex in 1808—a match in which the village received substantial aid from Lord Frederick Beauclerk. Readers of " Seven Men " will remember that Enoch Soames had an entirely different reason for going; frankly, his presence in the Museum was the result of a compact with the Devil. Gradually the two quests are made, if not actually to converge, at any rate to throw some light on each other. But the mystery deepens, and Mrs. Mallard, though pleased by Soames's fulsome compliments, begins to have some strange suspicions.

Mr. Harold Hobson writes unusually well and his culture is just enough off the beaten track to make the landscape of his mind extremely pleasant. He has wit and distinction. But thoroughly to enjoy his book one must be an enthusiast, almost a devotee of cricket; I have not lost my boyhood's hero-worship for its great exponents, but even so I found Mr. Hobson's absorption in its annals a little difficult to share.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

The Merry Wives of Westminster. By Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. (*Macmillan; 12s. 6d.*)

Peggy Windsor and the American Soldier. By Frank Tilsley. (*Eyre and Spottiswoode; 9s.*)

The Oval Table. By J. Jefferson Farjeon. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)

The Devil in Woodford Wells. By Harold Hobson. (*Longmans; 8s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl:
No.58. Ida Lupino

IDA LUPINO is the youngest member of one of the world's most famous theatrical families. For hundreds of years her ancestors have been actors, and Barry, Stanley and Wallace Lupino, and Lupino Lane are all famous stage personalities of to-day. She started her career at the age of thirteen, when she appeared as a film extra, and a year later played a leading picture rôle opposite to John Loder. Later she made a big hit as Bessie in " The Light That Failed," and her latest starring rôle is that of Emily Brontë in " Devotion " (Warner Theatre), with Olivia de Havilland as Charlotte Brontë and Arthur Kennedy as Branwell.

BURNT TOAST AND COLD BACON.*

By NOEL HAYWARD.

JULIET stood at the bottom of the stairs. "Please hurry up and come down," she called; "breakfast 's been ready for the last ten minutes." She heard Freddie cross the landing, come thumping down the stairs, and walk through the hall into the dining-room.

"I do wish you wouldn't always burn the toast," he said as he sat down, and then added, "And what 's more, this bacon is stone cold."

Juliet felt her temper rising. "That doesn't surprise me in the least," she said. "If you would condescend to come down at a respectable hour, it might be hot."

"What the hell 's wrong with the oven, or are you going to tell me it doesn't work?" Freddie furiously enquired.

"Nothing 's wrong with the oven, but I thought you were on the point of coming down; you said you were."

Freddie got up from the table and, throwing down his napkin, said, "Oh, for God's sake. I 'm going to have breakfast in the mess, where at least I can get something hot *and* civil attention!" And with that he stalked out of the house.

Juliet felt completely stunned. She heard the car start up and roar down the road at a terrific pace. She stared in front of her. What had suddenly gone wrong with their marriage, she wondered; this last week had been full of rows; they just seemed to be getting on each other's nerves now.

She remembered meeting Freddie two years ago at an officers' mess party; how beautifully he had danced; how tall and good-looking he was. He was flying Hurricanes then, on operations; she remembered those awful nights when she had known he was flying and how desperately worried she had been.

They were married six months later, and since then they had been moving all round England, Scotland and Wales, living in a succession of furnished houses. Until about a week ago it had all been such fun; why were they getting on each other's nerves now? What a stupid, trifling thing to have a row about this morning. It could have been so easily avoided. Why hadn't she put his breakfast in the oven? Why hadn't she watched the toast more carefully? All the same, he needn't have rushed off like that, and he 'd probably be flying to-day, too. She hoped that he would ring her up before he did. She would gladly say "Sorry" now; only please God, she prayed, don't let him fly in that frame of mind. Anything might happen.

All the way to the aerodrome Freddie's mind was in a whirl; he was feeling slightly ashamed of himself, but, all the same, he felt it really was a bit too much to expect any man to put up with. What had happened to Juliet lately? She didn't seem to care any more whether things were nice, and she was always binding him. She never *used* to mind if he was late in the mornings, and he, too, wondered where their marriage was going wrong and why. Maybe they were just getting bored with each other? If only they had had a baby maybe this wouldn't have happened, and he wondered vaguely whether it would work if they tried to start all over again with this second honeymoon that people were always talking about.

But what Juliet needed first of all was a damn good shaking up; something to frighten her out of this nagging frame of mind.

By this time Freddie had arrived at the flight and walked into the crew room, to find his old friend Clive Denby climbing into a parachute. "Hello, Freddie, and how 's life?" said Clive cheerfully.

"Oh, O.K., thanks," Freddie replied. "I 've just discovered that I 've got to fly a Meteor up to the North of England to-day—Johnny 's taking the Anson to bring me back."

"What bad luck," said Clive. "I 'm taking up a Tempest to practise aerobatics."

"Are you?" said Freddie. "Well, why not go and aerobat her over my house? Juliet simply loves watching displays and it would give her something to do. It 's about time I did a bit of practice myself. I really must get weaving now as I am late for take-off already." And with that Freddie picked up his parachute and hurried off.

Clive Denby was a renowned ace at aerobatics, and it was said that when he got into the cockpit of any single-engined aircraft he automatically became part of it. Freddie was fully aware of the kind of stunts that Clive would be doing to-day; he also knew that Juliet loathed watching aircraft stunting more than anything else. Freddie was pretty hopeless at it himself, and she knew it, so he hoped that Juliet would think that it was he. That ought to give her something to think about and shake her out of her present complacent mood; and, with these unpleasant thoughts, he climbed into the cockpit of the Meteor and took off.

It was about eleven a.m. when Juliet first heard an aircraft flying around the house trying to attract attention. She had gone around her household chores that morning feeling pretty miserable, and now she stopped making the bed and ran downstairs and out on to the lawn to wave at the roaring machine. It must be Freddie, she thought; he 's just come over to say everything 's all right after all. "Oh, hello, my darling, I 'm sorry about this morning," she whispered, frantically waving a white handkerchief so that he should recognise her. She always did this whenever he flew over her as he had once said "White is so much easier to see from the air."

Then the Tempest started rolling, looping, diving and turning above the house.

"Oh, for God's sake be careful," said the petrified Juliet standing below. "You know you can't do it, you know you can't, you know you can't. Please don't try to frighten me any more; please don't. Freddie. Freddie, darling, go and land, darling."

But her pleas were in vain, and the roaring, twisting, turning aircraft continued to loop, roll and dive.

Clive was having a lovely time and decided as a grand finale to do a slow roll low over the house. To Juliet, standing there, it was more than terrifying to watch the aircraft roar over not far above and start to roll in front of her.

"He *can't* make it this time," she thought. "He can't possibly; he 's much too low. Straighten out, straighten out," she frantically yelled "*Don't* try to roll." But it was too late; the valiant little Tempest hadn't the height to complete the roll and the next second there was a frightful rending and tearing of metal as the aircraft ploughed its way into the ground and started to burn furiously not a field away from where Juliet was standing.

Juliet ran for all she was worth to the flaming wreckage; all she could think of was "I must get him out, I must, I must. Oh, my Freddie darling, darling."

The heat was intense, but she seemed possessed, her only thought being to get to the cockpit and get him out. At last she found him, a mere figure among the flames. She had a funny feeling that she was, herself, a flame with the others, and wondered why it wasn't hurting her.

At that moment there was a blinding explosion as the petrol tanks blew up. And Juliet knew no more.

It was about six that evening before the Anson with Freddie and Johnny landed at base. They had had quite a good trip and Freddie was glad to be back. They taxied around the perimeter track and then reported to flying control. The F.C.O. met them with a long face.

"Good Lord," said Freddie cheerfully, "what are all the grim faces for; has leave been cancelled or something?"

"No, but Clive Denby bought it this morning doing a slow roll without enough height. Just went straight in; there wasn't a chance. Apparently a local lost his life trying to get him out, but the petrol tank blew up, so that was that. It all happened before the crash tender got there; beastly show; they haven't identified the other body yet."

Johnny said, "I 'm surprised Clive didn't know better; he was such a good pilot. He must have been showing off. Poor old Clive! This is as bad as ops."

But Freddie was going through hell.

"I hope to God Juliet didn't see it happen," he thought. "If she did she probably thought it was me. I must ring her up right away and see if she 's O.K."

He picked up the 'phone and gave the telephonist the number. He heard it ringing in their house.

"Why doesn't she answer it?" he thought. "She must be there. She 's always so quick about answering it."

Then the crisp voice of the operator cut in on his thoughts. "I 'm sorry, Sir, but there 's no reply."

"Don't be silly," he said. "Try again; there 's bound to be, there 's *got* to be."

But there wasn't, and the telephone went on ringing through the empty house.

Slowly a cold fear came over him.

"Apparently a local lost his life trying to get him out. They haven't identified the other body yet."

"Oh, my God; Julie, Julie darling."

But all he heard was the cold metallic ringing of the telephone.

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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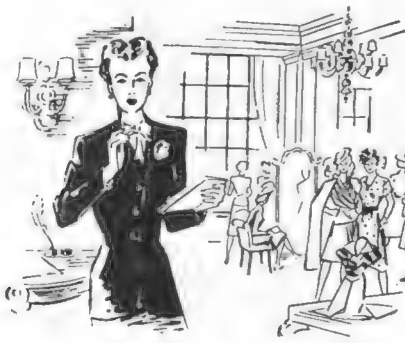

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Photograph by Eric Joysmith.

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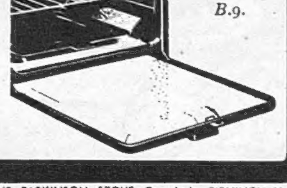

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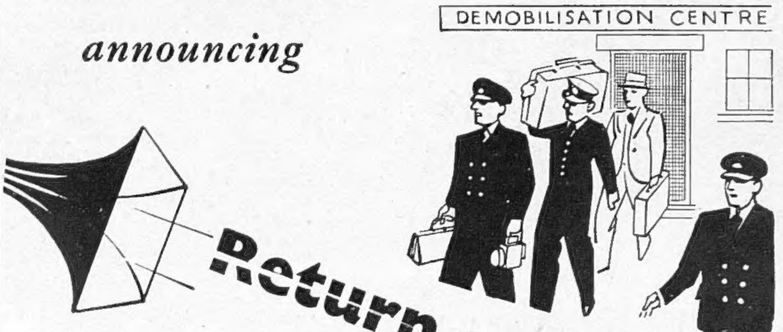

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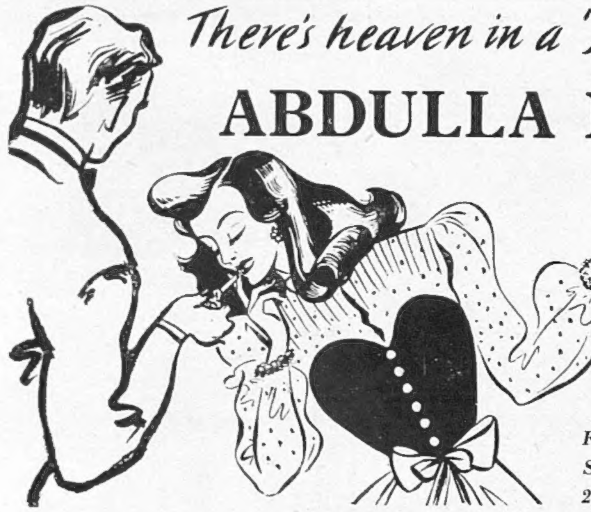

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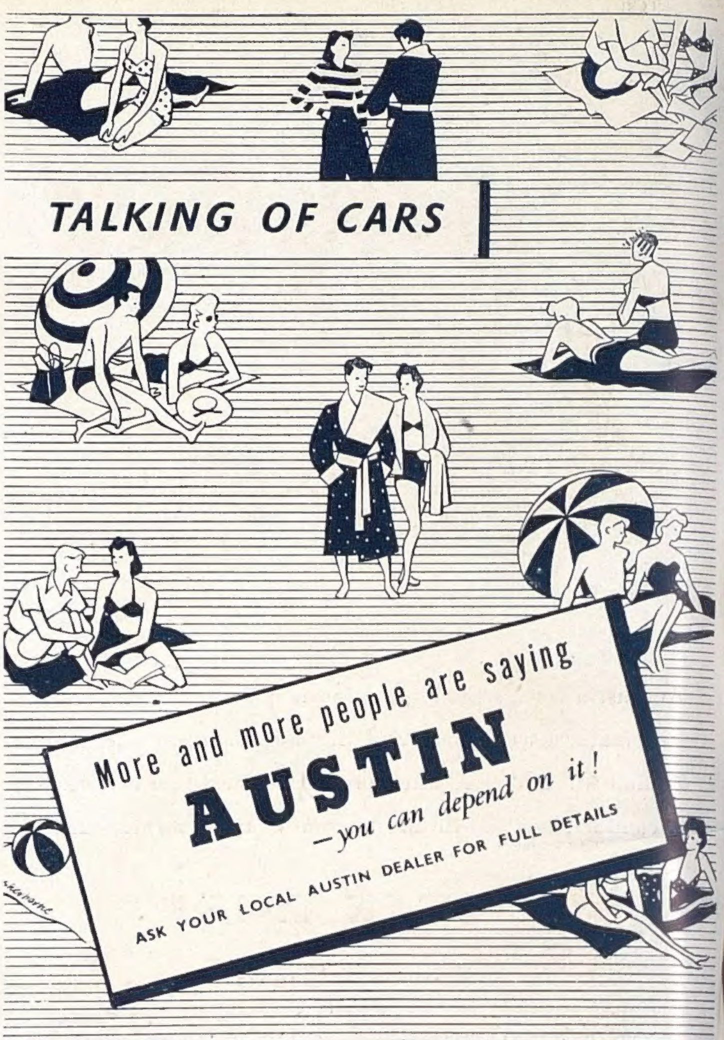

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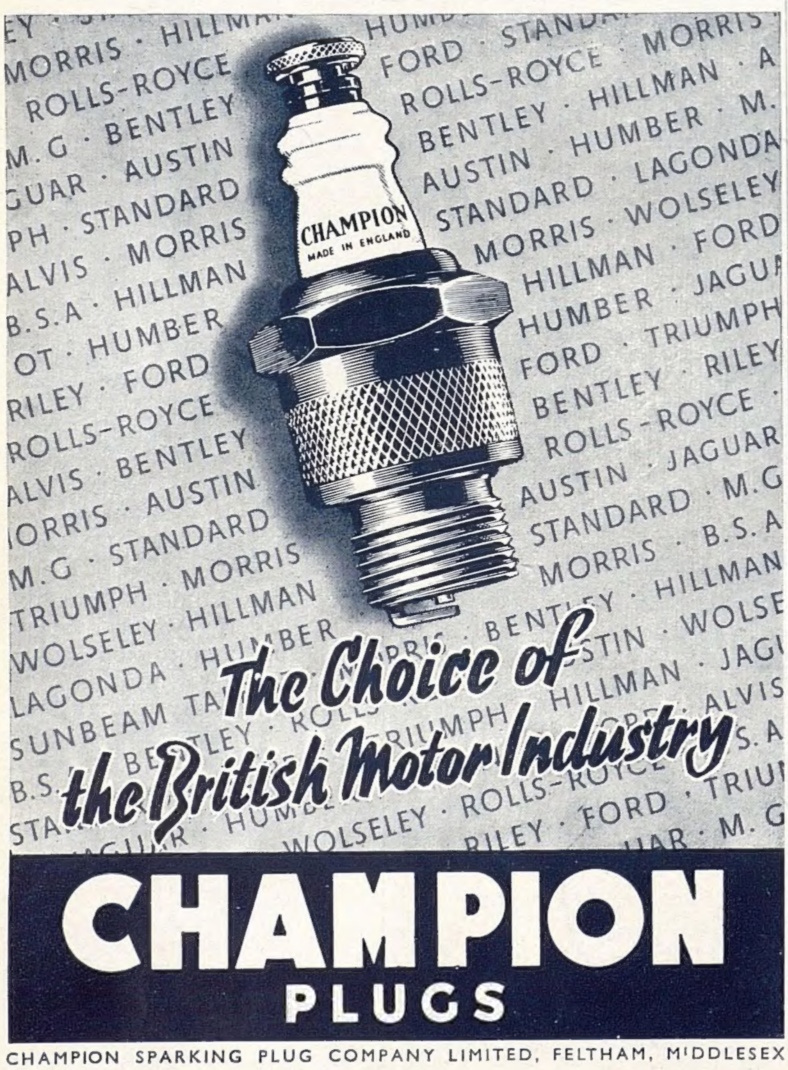

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